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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

31 July 1961

Dear Dean:

I know that you are assembling many thoughts on Berlin negotiations. I attach one approach for what it is worth based on three premises:

a. Our "rights" in Berlin are of no real value in themselves. We would like to get rid of them if an honorable way were found.

b. On the other hand, the safety of West Berlin is vital to us and to fulfill our commitment we should be prepared to risk war.

c. However, our position on Germany and West Berlin should be no tougher than that of the West Germans.

If these premises are correct, why not let the West Germans do our negotiating for us, feeling that we can probably accept any settlement which they will indorse? We would lose nothing if we disposed of our "rights" un'er conditions where the safety of West Berlin were amply protected.

MAXWELL D. TAYLOR

Honorable Dean Rusk
Secretary of State
Washington, D. C.

Enclosure

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SECRET

The U.S. encourages the formation of a Mixed German Committee representing West Germany, West Berlin and East Germany for the purpose of developing proposals for the settlement of the German and the Berlin questions. These representatives are authorized to assume for the purpose of their discussions that the U.S., U.K. and France would undertake to transfer their rights in Berlin to the West German government and that the USSR would do likewise in transferring its Berlin rights to the East German government. Thus, the conferees will have new assets for negotiation and will be unimpeded by agreements arising out of the termination of the war in working out new proposals for Germany and Berlin.

All four powers would reserve the right to give approval to any ultimate arrangement affecting their rights in Germany and in Berlin. While these negotiations were in progress, there would be no change in current Allied rights of access and presence in Berlin.

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